

BREAST CANCER UK POLICY ON ANIMAL TESTING

The [3Rs principles](#)ⁱ of Replacement, Reduction, and Refinement of the use of animals in research, are guiding principles that underpin research practices in the UK. Effectively they state that researchers should seek to replace animals with non-animal alternatives wherever possible; keep animal numbers to a minimum; and for animals which are used, keep suffering to a minimum.

Breast Cancer UK is supportive of the 3Rs principles, and in relation to its scientific funding programme, will only support research that adheres to the first of these; i.e. replacement. We will not fund research that relies on animal testing or uses materials derived from animal testing. We will only consider funding for research which relies on Replacement Methods of testing. Breast Cancer UK will actively seek to promote and encourage alternatives to animal testing as defined by the 3Rs.

The 3Rs principles provide guidelines for replacement of animal use in research. These include the use of “human volunteers, tissues and cells”.

We will consider grant applications that use human stem cells and will consider those that use foetal tissue, if Breast Cancer UK’s Independent Science Panel and the Science Committee agree that this is the best research method available, no other alternatives exist and the research will help us to better understand the impact of chemical contaminants on breast cancer risk. All funding would be subject to the necessary informed consents being obtained and all research must adhere to the [MRC code of practice for the use of human stem cell lines](#).

A note on SEARCHbreastⁱⁱ

SEARCH (Sharing Experimental Animal Resources, Coordinating Holdings) is a concept, which aims to make material derived from animal studies in biomedical research that is surplus (and would be discarded or stored indefinitely, but unlikely ever to be used) accessible to scientists. The SEARCH concept has been developed for material associated with breast cancer studies, and is known as SEARCHbreast. This resource facilitates sharing of archived material derived from *in vivo* breast cancer models, including mouse models.

Breast Cancer UK will not fund research grant applications which access SEARCHbreast material. Although we recognise it will not involve live animal experiments, the tissue will have been taken from live animals. Whilst this resource may be consistent with the 3Rs policy, it is not strictly consistent with our interpretation of the concept of replacement.

Breast Cancer UK is committed to promoting and encouraging an ethical approach to scientific research. Our approach and policy on funding research will be kept under constant review.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The 3Rs: <http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs>

ⁱ <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs>
ⁱⁱ <https://searchbreast.org/>